

THE PERSPECTIVES OF MICROREGIONS IN THE HINTERLAND OF PRAGUE IN VIEW OF TOURISM AND SECOND HOMES DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: Two selected microregions were surveyed in the southern hinterland of Prague, with purpose to outline their perspectives. After explaining of delimitation and main features of the regions, significant information about present state in tourism and mainly second homes' activities are given. The main objective is to reveal through the regional comparison the chances for future development with the aid of adjusted SWOT analysis.

Key words: tourism, second homes, regions in the hinterland of Prague

1. DELIMITATION AND MAIN FEATURES OF THE SELECTED REGION

1.1. Hostomice Region

Hostomice region was delimited according to the prevailing commuting processes to the natural centre of Hostomice. The region contents the area of 13 municipalities (Tab. 1) in the south-eastern part of the Beroun District. The total area is 93 km² with 4800 permanent inhabitants. Hostomice were promoted to the town status in 1992 again and became the seat of so called "commissioned town authorities" in the framework of decentralisation trends.

The region is situated at the foot of the Brdy and the Hřebený Hills. Most of the settlements is located in shallow basins, with the average altitude of 310 - 350 m. The

highest points of the Hřebeny range reach over 600 m. 28 % of the area is under forest, with spruces, oaks and beeches in the hilly parts. In regards to a quite unpolluted environment with a lot of forests and attractive relief, there were some suggestions for proclamation a new Protected Landscape Area - a part of the Brdy and the Hřebeny Hills. They have not been accepted so far due to some special activities in the whole Brdy region (army zone, consequences of mining in the Příbram region). The Hostomice basin is a traditional agriculture region, with the percentage of arable land about 40 %. Crops are planted and pigs, cattle and poultry are bred above all. Agricultural activities sometimes play a role of a disturbing factor for recreation, only small industrial plants are quite suitable for leisure time activities. On the other hand the region suffers a bit from a narrow offer of jobs, commuting to neighbouring centres (Hořovice, Beroun, Příbram District) is widely spread. The location of the region at the edge of Prague metropolitan area makes possible close contacts with the capital area as well.

The local railway Zadní Třebáň - Lochovice can be considered a traditional "backbone" of the region (in 1993 there were some suggestions for establishment of an informal association of municipalities along this local railway). The dominant traffic was transferred to the road axis Prague - Řevnice - Hostomice - Jince - Příbram.

Table 1 Main characteristics of the municipalities in the Hostomicko Region

Municipality	Area km ²	Population	Perm. inh. houses	Recreational houses	Density RH/km ²	RH/100 inh.	RH/100 perm. inh. houses	RO/ total houses (%)
Hostomice	28,28	1 562	439	186	7	12	42	30
Běštin	2,99	284	102	63	21	22	62	38
Lážovice	4,89	92	31	44	9	48	142	59
Lhotka	5,35	267	92	35	6	13	38	28
Nesvačily	2,74	112	37	28	10	25	76	43
Neumětely	9,37	498	135	21	2	4	16	13
Osov	2,45	412	100	38	15	9	38	28
Podbrdy	3,78	163	48	13	3	8	27	21
Skřípel	3,06	108	30	15	5	14	50	33
Skuhrov	8,67	362	108	138	16	38	128	56
Velký Chlumec	4,53	350	106	147	32	42	139	58
Vižina	3,89	196	50	17	4	9	34	25
Všeradice	13,89	390	100	52	4	13	26	34
Total	93,89	4 796	1 378	797	9	17	58	37

Source: internal materials - Department of Regional Development, District Office Beroun (1991) - modified

1.2. The Dolní (Lower) Kocába Region

This region was delimited for the purpose of a granted project backed by the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Agency for Agricultural Research - "The Harmonization of Regional Development in the Kocába Basin" (Final Report, 1997), later adjusted for the purposes of other surveys, mainly on the basis of commuting processes (Vágner, 1999). The most significant features are the following:

- ♦ quite significant inner heterogeneity of the region but with a lot of common processes bound within the territory
- ♦ very intensive recreational activities (second homes)
- ♦ location at the edge of Prague metropolitan area with some suburban trends but on the other hand with some strong features of periphery

The region contains 9 municipalities (tab. 2) with the area of 114 km² and 5700 permanent inhabitants. Four municipalities are situated in Prague-West District, five municipalities in Příbram District. There are many separated recreational settlements spread in the Kocába River Valley, which have been changing settlement structure and the face of landscape. Two main centres can be found - Nový Knín and Štěchovice. Nový Knín is just building its position as a local traffic knot and as the centre of services with microregional effect. Štěchovice (and Slapy) play roles of centres with mixed permanent housing and recreational functions. Due to the location along and close to the important "weekend road" (II/102) a wide choice of services for motorists is offered. The main differences within the region are mainly due to uneven distance to the main communications connecting the settlements with Prague. The western part of the region is closely related to Dobříš hinterland with connections to the main road axis Prague - Příbram - Strakonice. A little northerly situated local railway Prague - Vrané n.V. - Mníšek p.B. - Dobříš played a more significant role in the beginnings of recreational and second homes activities. For location of both regions, see Figure 1.

2. METHODS OF SURVEYS AND BASIC FACTS ON TOURISM AND SECOND HOMES

Main conclusions resulted from central, regional and local statistics but mainly from field observations. In both regions a lot of structured talks with representatives of local self-government and other institutions, entrepreneurs, permanent inhabitants, owners of second homes and their families were held (in the Hostomice Region 1991-98). In the Dolní Kocába Region questionnaire surveys were done (1995-98). For more information about the methodology see Vágner (1994, 1999) and Fialová (1992, 1995).

In 1998 there were 829 second homes counted in the whole Hostomice Region, which means that about 1/3 of all houses were used for recreational purposes. 31 % of them were log-cabins ("chaty") and small recreational houses and the rest were cottages. The main boom of new recreational houses' constructions was in two waves during the 70s and the 80s. The total number of recreants may exceed 3000 in full season (about 70 % of permanent population).

The Dolní Kocába Region is much more densely settled with the recreational houses (3419 in 1998), which means a quadruple of permanently inhabited houses. 90 % of them are logs, often wooden ones. The tradition of second homes has been closely

connected with tramping movement since the 1920s. The total number of recreants exceeds during summer weekends 15 000 which is a treble of the permanent population.

Table 2 Main characteristics of the municipalities in the Dolní (Lower) Kocába Region

Municipality	Area km ²	Population	Perm. inh. houses	Recreational houses	Density RH/km ²	RH/100 inh.	RH/100 perm. inh. houses	RO/ total houses (%)
Bojanovice	10,97	230	74	209	30	90	282	78
- Malá Lečice		91	27	81		89	300	78
- Senešnice		66	22	48		72	217	68
Bratřínov		4,21	91	32	152	36	167	475
Slapy	20,24	595	180	902	44	151	501	80
Štěchovice	14,29	995	244	232	75	23	95	49
- Masečín		157	51	671		427	1 316	93
- Třeбенice		193	40	180		93	450	82
Nový Knín	29,62	1 190	291	104	7	8	36	23
- Hranice		7	2	5		71	250	71
- Chramniště		36	8	5		13	63	38
- Kozí Hory		45	16	66		146	412	80
- Libčice		213	50	14		6	28	22
- Sudovice		225	64	15		6	23	18
Malá Hraštice	9,28	378	106	312		82	294	74
- Velká Hraštice		216	70	73	41	33	104	51
Nové Dvory	8,38	136	40	21	10	15	52	35
- Krámy		46	15	68		147	453	79
Nová Ves p. Pleši	10,96	667	169	272	24	40	160	61
Velká Lečice	5,19	163	50	79	15	48	158	63
Total	113,14	5 740	1 551	3 509	30	60	219	69

Source: Census (SLBD) 1991 - District Praha-západ, Příbram, ČSÚ - modified

The results for both regions show that a typical second home is used by three generations, the owners are at the average age of 40 - 65 years (Dolní Kocába - one half are retired people), better educated, with intellectual professions. 80 % of recreants in the Hostomice Region live in Prague, for the Dolní Kocába Region is the ratio much higher (96 %). Commuting by car prevails (30 - 60 minutes). For more detailed structure of second homes and their owners, see Bičík and Fialová (1997), Fialová (1995, 1999) and Vágner (1994, 1999).

Fixed amount of second homes is typical for both regions during the 1990s. Some shifts for permanent living can be clearly seen (13 % of second homes in the Dolní Kocába Region are used already permanently in fact and even about 30 % of owners turn their minds to possible future permanent living - Fialová, 1999).

For the beginning of the 90s a slight grow of small local private shops and workshops, pubs, catering and accommodation facilities (small private hotels, rooms to let) with some features of agro-tourism ideas are evident. However, the potential of the territory has not been exploited fully at all so far.

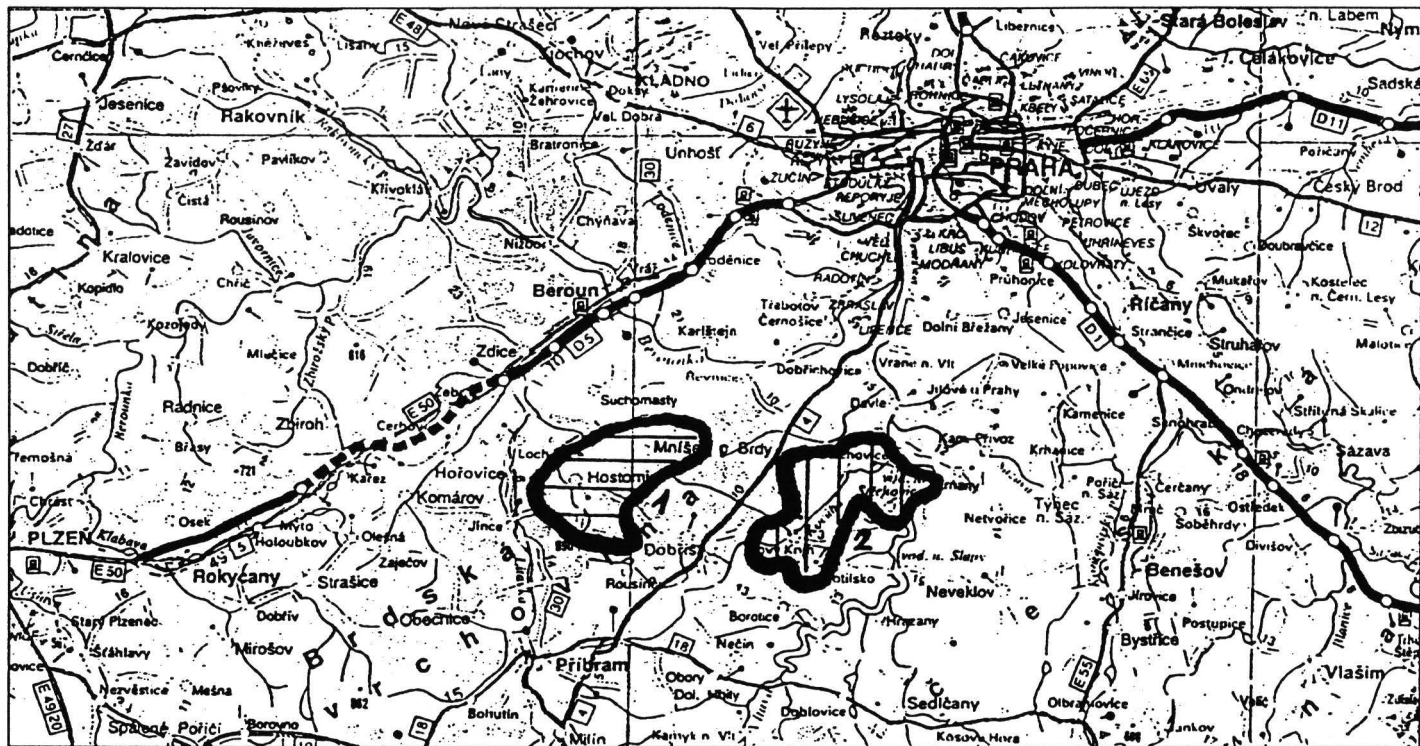


Fig. 1 Location of the Hostomicko (1) and the Dolní (Lower) Kocába (2) regions
 Source: Automapa ČR, Euroverlag, 1994

3. PERSPECTIVES OF THE REGIONS

(H = Hostomicko Region, DK = Dolní Kocába Region)

The Strengths:

- ♦ high quality of natural landscape potential, low values of air-pollution
- ♦ vicinity of sources for tourism and recreation (Prague), long tradition of second homes activities, favourable location along main communications (DK part)
- ♦ high amount of cottages - preservation of houses, defence against depopulation (H)
- ♦ interest of local authorities in the development of service sector and settlements (e.g. water and gas supply systems - H)

The Weaknesses:

- ♦ parts of the regions is located at the periphery, away from main communications, with worse bus service, local railway in decline
- ♦ neglected infrastructure and lack of fundamental services in periphery (e.g. shortage of phone lines = weak chances for better contacts)
- ♦ insufficient publicity and promotion of the regions
- ♦ lack of more important cultural monuments
- ♦ disturbing effects of some activities (agriculture, constructions), bad conditions of dusty roads
- ♦ problems with wastage and its collection, sewage system is mostly missing
- ♦ nearly no possibilities for swimming, bad quality of drinking water (DK)
- ♦ polluted woods and water (DK - end of traditional canoeing)
- ♦ later and slow development of tourism facilities and other services, weak cultural and sports chances
- ♦ bad access to health care (DK mainly)

The Threats:

- ♦ deeper differences between different parts of the regions (periphery) and particular settlements in a small area
- ♦ depopulation of some settlements, old age structure of permanent population and owners of second homes, degradation and end of some houses
- ♦ missing of physical and master plans for well-advised future development
- ♦ decline of public transport, end of local railway lines which made image of the regions
- ♦ ecological burden and landscape degradation caused with overcrowded recreational settlements
- ♦ no interest for the region due to bad publicity
- ♦ bad attitudes between permanent inhabitants and recreants - segregation
- ♦ interference between traditional recreational settlements and newly built large houses for permanent living, radical change of the space (DK mainly)

4. CONCLUSION

The Opportunities and chances for the regions:

- ♦ transformation of settlement and particular houses functions, shift of second homes to seasonal and permanent living, renting, extending wide scale of services
- ♦ development of agro-tourism activities
- ♦ building of tourist information centres (local authorities)
- ♦ support of one-day and biking tourism
- ♦ support of building other tourist facilities (camps, swimming-pools, petrol stations, small hotels, sport equipment, bike repair-shops etc.) in connection with "Green Fair" with international participants (H) and with developing cultural centres of Dobříš and Nový Knín (DK)- both for foreign tourists as well
- ♦ realisation of the programme of the Association of the Municipalities in the Hostomicko Region - biotechnology and alternative sources of energy (H), including other municipalities to the Association of the Municipalities in the Mníšek Region (DK), extension of the cooperation
- ♦ keeping of traditional local railways in function, support of promoting actions (e.g. steam runs), using of small railway stations in historic style for extending information and services
- ♦ taking advantage of relatively low air pollution for curative stays
- ♦ utilisation of various traditional activities for building of some "Education Paths" - e.g. Tramping at the Snake River" (DK), "Tradition of Gold Mining" - Novoknínsko (Museum of Gold in Nový Knín should be used for other promoting exhibitions and actions) etc.
- ♦ asserting of some type of protection for old weekend-houses and wooden logs - valuable elements of architecture and life style heritage (DK)
- ♦ support of various cultural actions and publicity of sport events (e.g. concerts in summer cinema, biking race "Cobra's Revenge" (H)

Very good landscape conditions and vicinity of tourist sources make a great potential for both regions at the edge of Prague Metropolitan Area to develop their tourism importance. The main burdens can be seen in slow development of infrastructure and service sector, weak publicity, lacks of physical and master plans and bad situation in tax policy, which does not make possible for municipalities to get more money from second homes taxes. In a relatively short future, both regions should become up-to-date multifunctional areas with prevailing recreational function orientated not only to traditional second homes but also to other tourist activities.

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Resumé

Perspektivy mikroregionů v zázemí Prahy v důsledku rozvoje cestovního ruchu a druhého bydlení

Předložený příspěvek si dává za cíl na příkladu dvou zkoumaných mikroregionů v jižním zázemí Prahy nastínit možnosti budoucího vývoje v oblasti cestovního ruchu a druhého bydlení při okraji pražského metropolitního systému. Úvodem je podáno vymezení vybraných území s charakterizováním hlavních geografických skutečností. Dále jsou naznačeny metody zjišťování detailnějších informací o stavu cestovního ruchu, druhého bydlení a šířeji i služeb s těmito jevy a procesy spojenými. Hlavním cílem příspěvku je na základě srovnání obou regionů a prostřednictvím upravené a zjednodušené analýzy SWOT odhalit potenciál obou území a předložit konkrétní návrhy a směry, kterými by se sektor cestovního ruchu, rekreace a služeb mohl ubírat, v návaznosti na celkový rozvoj mikroregionů.